

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

BEARDSLEY, ALBERT R., HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

RUTHMERE (A 1910 HOUSE MUSEUM)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

302 EAST BEARDSLEY AVENUE

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

ELKHART

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
THIRD OF INDIANA

STATE

INDIANA

CODE  
018

COUNTY  
ELKHART

CODE  
039

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
___ DISTRICT	___ PUBLIC	___ OCCUPIED	___ AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
___ STRUCTURE	___ BOTH	___ WORK IN PROGRESS	___ COMMERCIAL
___ SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	___ EDUCATIONAL
___ OBJECT	___ IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	___ ENTERTAINMENT
	___ BEING CONSIDERED	___ YES: UNRESTRICTED	___ GOVERNMENT
		___ NO	___ INDUSTRIAL
			___ MILITARY
			___ PARK
			___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			___ RELIGIOUS
			___ SCIENTIFIC
			___ TRANSPORTATION
			___ OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

ANDREW HUBBLE BEARDSLEY AND WALTER RAPER BEARDSLEY FOUNDATION,

STREET & NUMBER

C/O FIRST NATIONAL BANK, P. O. BOX 460

CITY, TOWN

ELKHART

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

INDIANA

STATE

46515

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

ELKHART COUNTY COURT HOUSE

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

GOSHEN

STATE

INDIANA

46526

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE PART OF SURVEY OF INDIANA HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES. INVENTORY  
CONDUCTED BY DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES, STATE OF INDIANA.

DATE

JUNE 30, 1976

\_\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

ELKHART CITY CLERK AND DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

CITY, TOWN

ELKHART

STATE

INDIANA 46514

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The architectural style of Ruthmere is mostly French of the Beaux-Arts School, typical of fine town houses built around the turn of the century. The dwelling, basically four-square in plan with a rear service el and porticoed entry-carriageway, is placed somewhat arbitrarily on the site. The ratio of the depth of the west yard to the vertical height of the building is roughly 1:1. Spatially, this relationship appears successful since another relatively tall building is close across the street. The ratio of the front yard, disregarding the veranda and greenhouse is about 1:2. This weak relationship is negligible, however, since there are no buildings facing this exposure maintaining a vista of the river, the island, and the city beyond.

The site is contained by a low balustraded wall around its perimeter, broken only by brick piers which frame the various large iron gates that permit access onto the property. To the east of the main house, and connected by a porte-cochere and underground passage, is the greenhouse. Separating the greenhouse and the east lawn from the primary yard is the carriageway, which passes under the porte-cochere and continues to the garage building located at the north end of the site. This structure is detached from the house; however, it displays many of the same design elements. Like the house, it is compact, almost cubic, and heavily derivative in general appearance of contemporary French Beaux-Arts works. However, a new, non-eclectic spirit is working here as well. The influence of the mid-western "Prairie School Architecture" of Frank Lloyd Wright and others is strongly evident despite the eclectic context of the design. The design components differ from the main house in that intricate sculpture is totally lacking, replaced instead with strong abstracted and geometric ornamentation. Lineation is heavily emphasized and curved motives are kept to a minimum, appearing only in the slightly relieved arches of the first story fenestration. Horizontality is the overriding theme, from the wide brick and limestone courses at the base of the structure to the horizontally emphasized rustication of the pilasters culminating in a massive entablature. The garage takes on a more utilitarian design than the imposing sense of opulence radiated by the house.

Built of ochre colored Beldon Brick and Indiana limestone, the house consists of three stories and a basement. The stone successfully breaks up the mass of the block of the building. Its detail adds interest to the capitals and corners and creates excitement where the building meets the sky. Having provided the enclosing discipline of symmetry on each facade, monotony in design is cleverly avoided by the carefully irregular arrangements of the major and minor fenestrations, which are spaced for the convenience of the rooms rather than in accord with external geometric balance. These subtleties of design are well controlled by the authority and strength of the dominating chimney positions (four chimneys in all), the regular roundel windows of the ballroom floor, and especially by the bold parapet and cornice with its dentil mouldings. Having a flat roof, the parapet becomes an elaborate design element to terminate the vertical rise of the structure. As the dwelling is viewed from the west, an obvious setback occurs to divide the building into two separate blocks. This break is created by the internal functioning of the residence: Ruthmere is indeed almost two structures, joined by a fire wall, which separates the domestic offices at the rear from the formal living spaces. The symmetry of the south facade is relieved

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 7 - DESCRIPTION

by placing the primary entrance at the corner of the structure and by the wide veranda and porte-cochere leading to the greenhouse to the east.

It is evident to the visitor upon entering the vestibule that the same quality of craftsmanship and attention to rich detail encountered on the exterior is present in the interior of this sumptuous mansion. This emphasis on detail is maintained throughout the house, from basement assembly room to attic ballroom. The joinery, oak floors, mahogany doors and paneling are superb, while the plaster framework deserves close inspection, especially in the dining room. The stained glass panels in the hall, the beveled glass in doors and cusped windows, and the landing hall skylight are all exceptional in their individual quality of design and craftsmanship. The hall, which is also square, serves as an initial reception room, rich, dark and embracing, with boldly moulded paneling. A broad staircase, partly concealed, rises in the corner opposite to the lobby and does not dominate the room by its form or by inviting the visitor to spaces beyond. The rooms are arranged in obvious sequence to provide a change in experience. After the entrance hall is the drawing room, also square, well lit and fully feminine in contrast to the mellow masculinity of the preceding chamber. The library is reached by double doors on axis and is dominated by a huge marble mantle set in a robust mahogany frame which provides the climax for the proportions of the room, established by bold cornices and high paneling with corner bookcases. The floor contains grills admitting the sound of a twenty-rank choralcello combination organ-player piano installed in 1915 in the chamber below. The dining room is also a strong and somber room, with mahogany paneling enframing a series of polychromed landscape paintings on deep-pile velvet. Fitted glass display cabinets and a fine white Georgian marble fireplace with a rich mahogany overmantle combine to produce a commodious yet intimate room for family assembly and social occasions. The most important aspect of these principal rooms is undoubtedly proportion of height to area, together with careful control of detail. Each interior is equal to the next in the respect it commands. This grandeur is carried up the broad staircase to the second floor, which contains the elaborate bedrooms, guest room, and morning room. A narrower stairway at the rear of the structure leads to the third floor which houses the formal ballroom with its roundel windows.

The interior structural components are comprised of a combination of masonry veneer, structural steel or iron, heavy timber, and masonry bearing walls. The steel is used basically for columns, with heavy timber beams and subflooring. The built-up roof is supported by the original low-slope timber framing.

The residence has been maintained throughout the years and is in excellent structural condition. Restoration of the interior areas has been completed almost without regard to expense. Once again the elaborate ornamentations and decorations of this fine period house appear much as they did in 1909 when it was first occupied.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1908 - 1910

BUILDER/ARCHITECT E. Hill Turnock

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Ruthmere is one of the finest examples of Pre-World War I domestic architecture left in the country. Built during America's "Golden Age", it is an extraordinary example of the mansions of the new industrial rich who came to power around the turn of the century. It is a statement about the sense of accomplishment of its builders. Ruthmere might comfortably be found among the cottages of Newport, R. I. The fact that it was built in a middle western railroad town with a population of 7,000 in 1908 is a pleasant surprise deserving special attention.

Constructed between 1908-1910, the residence was designed by E. Hill Turnock, an English architect. Commissioned by Albert R. Beardsley, the nephew of Dr. Havilah Beardsley, founder of Elkhart, the architect was told to build the house of the finest materials available. He wanted them to come first from Elkhart, then the county, then from Indiana and "... if not in the state then in America. Get everything from as close to home as you can." The mahogany woodwork came from Elkhart County, the limestone for its perimeter wall and exterior ornamentation from the quarries of Bedford, Indiana. Its yellow Belden brick came from Dayton, Ohio (where Mr. Beardsley was born in 1847), and the tons of Cherokee marble used for its porches and bathrooms were hauled in from Georgia. With the exception of the drawing room furniture, which was French, most of the original furnishings, apart from antiques, came from Grand Rapids, Michigan, 120 miles away.

Ruthmere is sited on Beardsley Avenue, high on the north banks of the St. Joseph River, directly east of the triple-span bridge at the north end of Elkhart's Main Street. The geographic dominance of this command position is reflected in the bricks and mortar and richness of exterior detail that make Ruthmere a continuing dramatic attraction for local citizens and visitors.

Born on a farm in Dayton, Ohio, Albert Raper Beardsley (1847-1924) came to Elkhart in 1863. By 1876 he was a prominent citizen with interests in the Muzzey Starch Company and various small local businesses. By 1890 he was a manager of Dr. Miles Chemical Company (now known as Miles Laboratories, Inc.), a prominent manufacturer of patent medicine and other home remedies. Albert and his wife, Elizabeth Baldwin Beardsley, first lived in a house on High Street, a wedding gift from the bride's father. There, in 1880, the couple's only child, Ruth, was born. She died in infancy a year later. It is after this only child that Ruthmere was named. Dr. Miles Medical Company continued in high favor with the American public despite increasing demands for investigations of patent medicines. By the turn of the century Mr. Beardsley had amassed a large fortune.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 8 - SIGNIFICANCE

Mr. Beardsley's insistence on the best was also reflected in his selection of an architect. Enock Hill Turnock, born in London in 1857, came to Elkhart in 1871 when his father, a glass and china merchant, settled his family here. Until he moved to Elkhart in 1907, Turnock was associated with various Chicago architects, including William LeBaron Jenney and Frank Lloyd Wright. Until his death in 1926, he was one of the midwest's leading architects. Mr. Turnock's major work was residential; and it is no wonder, since the success of Ruthmere, the first house in the area to be built on such a grand scale, established his reputation and brought him commissions for years.

Ruthmere is a significant structure architecturally. It is an excellent example also of the style of living enjoyed by the rich around the turn of the century. It is also a prime example of the works of the architect, E. Hill Turnock. Completely restored to its original design and condition, Ruthmere was opened to the public as a 1910 House Museum by Indiana Governor Otis R. Bowen, M.D., September 8, 1973.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Periodicals: The American Heritage Society's Americana, May, 1975, Vol. 3, Number 2, "Ruthmere", by Robert Beardsley, p. 35. -- The American Painting Contractor, June, 1974, Vol. 51, Number 6 -- The Hoosier Farmer, June, 1977, Vol. 62, Number 6

(continued)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.54

UTM REFERENCES

A	16	585440	4616030	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots No. 200, 201, 202 as the said lots are known and designated on the Recorded Plat of Beardsley Fourth Addition to the town, now City of Elkhart, Indiana, except the north one-hundred forty (140') feet thereof.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Robert B. Beardsley, Director

(Assisted by: Ronald Baker, Wiley & Assoc., Inc. - Architects)

ORGANIZATION

Andrew Hubble Beardsley & Walter Raper Beardsley Foundation

DATE May 26, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

c/o First National Bank, P. O. Box 460

TELEPHONE 295-2000

CITY OR TOWN

Elkhart

STATE

Indiana 46514

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE     

LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL  
PAGE 9 - REFERENCES

Newspapers:

The Elkhart Truth, September 13, 1971

The Elkhart Truth, August 14, 1972

The Elkhart Truth, September 10, 1973 -- Photograph of Indiana Governor  
Otis R. Bowen, M.D., at Opening Ceremonies, September 8, 1973

The Elkhart Truth, April 20, 1974 -- Photograph of The Hon. John Brademas,  
U. S. Representative, presenting flag from The White House.

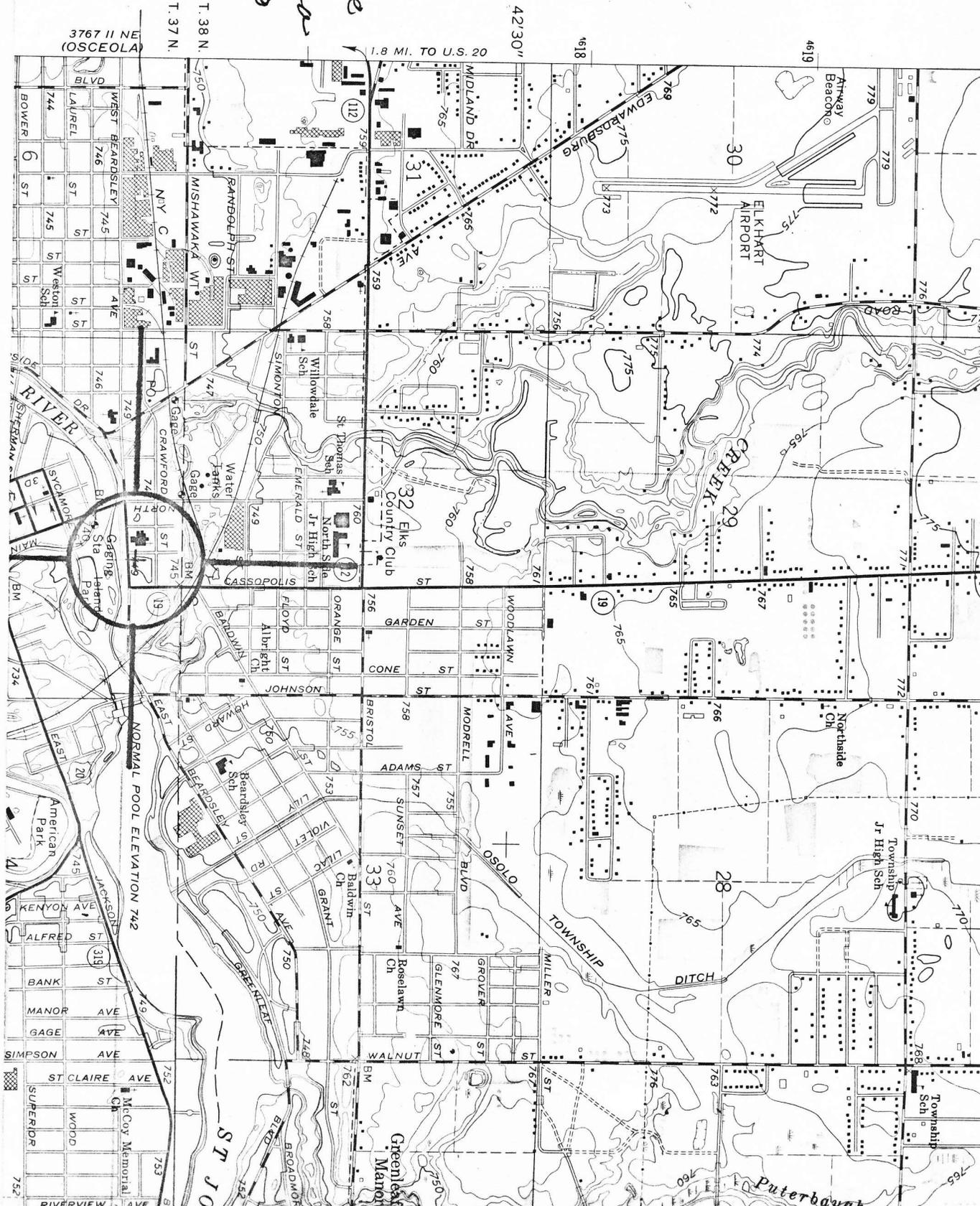
The South Bend Tribune, South Bend, Indiana, June 23, 1974 --

The Elkhart Truth, June 21, 1975 -- "Ruthmere Museum Historic Showplace"

The Indianapolis Star, August 17, 1975

Note: Only major stories are cited, along with important photo stories  
involving prominent persons.

Beardsley House  
Elkhart, Indiana  
U.T.M. Reference  
19585 440/4616030



3767 II NE  
(OSCEOLA)

T. 37 N.  
T. 38 N.

1.8 MI. TO U.S. 20

42'30"

4619

30

29

28

DITCH

TOWNSHIP

ST JOHNS

Puterbaugh